

Submitted
7/12/99

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**Susan Carter
2458 N.W. 15th Place
Gainesville, Florida 32605**

July 12, 1999

Mayor Paula M. DeLaney
Commissioner Bruce L. DeLaney
Commissioner Edward L. Jennings
Commissioner John R. Barrow
Commissioner Pegeen Hanrahan

Dear Commissioners:

On June 28th I made a call to the Commission Hot Line to respond to the appointment of Jane Meyers to the City Plan Board. My comments were as follows.

I disagree with the appointment of Jane Meyers because with all of the current problems with EOD and Affirmative action it would not be wise to place yet another person on the plan board that shared the same opinions and views as the majority of the board, and would be a poor choice given all the other applications. Upon investigation I received a copy of the paraphrase that was given to the commission.

"Caller agrees with Commissioner Jennings. Jane Meyers is very opinionated and is a very bad candidate."

As you can see, taken out of context one might find the statement inappropriate. At citizen comment I raised the issue of land use and the direction this commission has taken. I brought this up in relation to the plan board because they are the board that makes recommendations to the commission on land use issues. They recommended denial of the Emmer land use change. Who serves on this board is critical to our city. Those serving are charged with and I quote from the Plan Board Description:

"The City Plan Board gathers information and makes recommendations to the City Commission on a comprehensive plan of the City showing all major projected changes: the needs of the City with regard to recreation, parks and boulevards, the extension and opening of streets and avenues or other public ways or places and all other city plans and improvements; and changes and improvements in building and fire limit ordinances".

The following are the registered addresses of the current and new appointee.

2458 N.W. 15th Place
3205 S.W. 5th Ct.
114 N.E. 7th Avenue
560 N.E. 6th Avenue
1024 N.E. 4th St.

1715 N.W. 8th Ave.

Ms. Dowling's home address was not available.

As you can see, three of the seven live in or around the duck pond. The others live within biking distance of the University of Florida.

I do believe these individuals are capable of responsible decisions, no matter where they reside, however I do not believe it is a fair representation of all citizenry. There is no representation to the far east, far north, or far south of our city, that ladies and gentlemen was my point.

On Tuesday June 29th I received about 4 phone calls from concerned citizens to let me know I had been mis-quoted and portrayed in an unfavorable light over the Sustainable Alachua County List Serve by Commissioner Hanrahan. I have included the e-mail for your viewing. Commissioner Hanrahan said and I quote,

"the wife of a prominent developer, Susan Carter, stood up to lambast the commission"

and further on in her statements she said,

"what especially bothered me was the attempt by Mrs. Carter to impugn Mrs Myers as an appointee.

Contrary to what Commissioner Hanrahan would have SAC believe, I did not speak negatively about Mrs. Meyers. I too know her to be a responsible citizen who has been involved in many community issues. I do have the right however to express my opinions in regards to her suitability to the current plan board. It is imperative that our plan boards and commission consider what is best for all of our city residents and that we have adequate representation of all areas of our city.

I would also like to comment on Commissioner Hanrahan's final sentence.

"when even appointed officials are publicly criticized for political purposes, is it any wonder that good people are unwilling to serve in elective office"

Commissioner Hanrahan has every right to correspond with whomever she so chooses. However I don't think it appropriate to send out incorrect and demeaning comments to list serve users with out first checking her facts. I did check with Ms. Fiala who took the hot line comments, to see if she remembered the basic facts as I did. She agreed with me. As for the tenor in which my comments were delivered. I watched the tape to see if I was in any way rude or disrespectful. I think not. What I was however was truthful. Truthful about how I feel about the commission's actions. This commission needs citizens input. You would best serve your constituents with more diverse and wide ranging comments. Several commissioners in their response to citizens have made it loud and clear that they are not comfortable with criticism or different view points. People are not comfortable in this forum. The people do not want to place themselves in a situation where their comments will be met with derision and rudeness. However it is your job to listen to citizens, whether you are in agreement or not.

With commission comments going on and on for hours, people grow weary of listening. For those who work from eight till five have little time or energy to stay there until 1:00 AM to make their

comments. Without a chance of rebuttal after commissioner's comments citizen's are left with a negative feeling.

This commission currently has three members that are like-minded and usually fall on the same side of most issues. It is even more important with our commission make-up that all views are expressed and heard in an open forum by anyone concerned with current issues in a friendly environment.

I charge this commission with three things.

1. Make your comments concise and to the point. We are all weary of 30 minute reasons for your decisions. We're bright and can get the picture in 5 minutes.
2. Let citizens have their say. It isn't fair to put things into public record and not let the citizen defend their point.
3. Consider all of your decisions individually and wisely. Consider what will be the best result for the entire city. You represent a diverse group of citizens, not just a chosen few.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,



Susan Carter

cc: John Fitzwater

encl

From: Sustainable Alachua County, Inc. [SUSTAINABLE-L@LISTS.UFL.EDU] on behalf of Mevyleen@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 1999 10:41 PM
To: SUSTAINABLE-L@LISTS.UFL.EDU
Subject: Some Thoughts on Infill and Controversy

Hello All --

Last night the city commission completed a 10 hour hearing on a controversial land use decision on W. Newberry Road (the Glikes property, proposed for development by Phil Emmer). The commission chose to deny the land use change on a 3-2 vote. John Barrow, Bruce Delaney and I voted to deny, Paula DeLaney and Ed Jennings voted to approve. After the meeting, the wife of a prominent developer (Susan Carter, wife of Juddy Carter) stood up to lambast the commission not only for voting against the proposal, but also for appointing Jane Myers to the Plan Board. She accused the commission of being unclear about what we want, and of "stacking" the PB with people who share a narrow view of growth and development. Though some of us responded briefly during the meeting, I have not stopped thinking about her comments and the tenor in which they were delivered. Perhaps some of these specific comments refer more generally to issues of interest to SAC members.
For example:

(1). Some speakers tried to make this one land use decision a litmus test for infill development. It should not be overlooked that not all infill development is created equal. For example, I predict that most of the same homeowners who opposed this proposal will embrace a proposal on the drawing board for nearby property across the street at the vacant Scotty's. Why? Because the Scotty's is now a big negative in the area. A nice proposal there definitely does enhance the character of the area. While I can agree that many developments can enhance an undeveloped site when the proposal is of extremely high quality and the existing site is of marginal quality, it was hard, impossible even, to know if this was to be the case at the site under consideration. It is, in fact, an "old growth" forest. Even when considering infill, there is a distinct difference between greenfield development and brownfield (or grayfield) redevelopment.

Some developers who spoke on behalf of the proposal tried to indicate that people will always oppose development. This is not true. The city commission has approved dozens of infill projects that had little opposition, or even garnered neighborhood support. The Chamber Building project and related apartments, Union Street, and Townsend (on the Orton Trust Land) are a few such examples. Many others exist.

(2). Design details and the track records of developers are more important in infill and redevelopment than in sprawl situations. When you are fitting a project into an existing fabric, it is important to have a sense of the community and confidence that it will complement what is already there. Also, some things that look dandy when you are passing at 50 mph look pretty rotten up close. Hopefully, in infill scenarios, people are up close a lot more often.

(3). Our land development codes do not really address the latest thinking on "green" or "sustainable development." The city commission has already asked our planning, utilities and public works staff to craft a "green building program," similar to those in other cities (Austin, Boulder, Portland, etc). This may then help direct "designing with nature," and protecting and

showcasing the best features of a site.

Under Comm. Newport's leadership, the county is looking at this as well. Hopefully we can adopt a single, seamless program.

(4). Commissioner Bruce Delaney suggested that with the few developable parcels left in town (most of which have site constraints but also have existing land use and zoning that allow use-by-right as single family or more intense development), it might be a good idea for the city to hold public participation/visioning processes to provide consensus direction. This would substitute for the more common formula of waiting for whatever a developer walks in with. The current process is risky and expensive for the developer, makes for bad feelings, and puts the nearby residents on the defensive. Bruce suggested a sort of "environmental overlay" concept that puts the citizens in a proactive stance of envisioning the best possible solution.

(5). Finally, Mrs. Carter was particularly negative in her comments about the plan board appointment, and tried to tie it into the land use decision. What she failed to note is that the votes did not correspond. Comms. Barrow, Delaney and Mayor DeLaney voted to appoint Mrs. Myers to the Plan Board. I voted with Comm. Jennings to appoint another applicant, Ms. Davonda Brown. What especially bothered me was the attempt by Mrs. Carter to impugn Mrs. Myers as an appointee. While I did not vote for her, I know her to be a thoughtful and responsible citizen who has devoted herself to many community causes over time. When even appointed officials are publicly criticized for political purposes, is it any wonder that good people are unwilling to serve in elective office?

Pegeen